

APPEAL NO. 023243
FILED FEBRUARY 5, 2003

This appeal arises pursuant to the Texas Workers' Compensation Act, TEX. LAB. CODE ANN. § 401.001 *et seq.* (1989 Act). A contested case hearing was held on December 12, 2002. The hearing officer determined that the compensable severed right thumb injury sustained by the respondent (claimant) on _____, extends to and includes the right shoulder and that the claimant had disability from March 18, 2002, through the date of the hearing. The appellant (carrier) appeals this decision. The claimant urges affirmance.

DECISION

Affirmed.

Whether the compensable thumb injury included the claimant's right shoulder and whether he had disability were factual questions for the hearing officer to resolve. The hearing officer is the sole judge of the weight and credibility of the evidence. Section 410.165(a). As the finder of fact, the hearing officer resolves the conflicts in the evidence and determines what facts have been established from the evidence presented. Nothing in our review of the record indicates that the hearing officer's decision is so against the great weight and preponderance of the evidence as to be clearly wrong or manifestly unjust. Cain v. Bain, 709 S.W.2d 175, 176 (Tex. 1986).

The carrier argues that there is no medical evidence establishing a causal link between the compensable injury and the right shoulder injury "within any reasonable medical probability." The claimant testified as to the mechanism of the injury and the manner in which the shoulder was involved. Generally, corroboration of an injury is not required and may be found based upon a claimant's testimony alone. Gee v. Liberty Mutual Fire Insurance Co., 765 S.W.2d 394 (Tex. 1989). Lay testimony is sufficient to establish causation where, based upon common knowledge, a fact finder could understand a causal connection between the employment and the injury. Texas Workers' Compensation Commission Appeal No. 941464, decided January 9, 1995. Given the facts of this case, we cannot agree that expert medical evidence was required to establish a causal link between the compensable thumb injury and the shoulder injury, however, we note that there is medical evidence in the record linking the shoulder condition to the compensable thumb injury.

The hearing officer's decision and order is affirmed.

The true corporate name of the insurance carrier is **MID-CENTURY INSURANCE EXCHANGE** and the name and address of its registered agent for service of process is

**FRED B. WERKENTHIN
100 CONGRESS AVENUE
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701.**

Chris Cowan
Appeals Judge

CONCUR:

Judy L. S. Barnes
Appeals Judge

Thomas A. Knapp
Appeals Judge